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ABSTRACT

This study investigates three hypotheses: (1) there is a positive relationship between maternal satisfaction with substitute child care and maternal work satisfaction; (2) there is no relationship between satisfaction with substitute child care and the quality of mother-child interaction; and (3) there is a positive relationship between maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction. The majority of data was obtained from 89 employed mothers from 190 intact families in rural and urban Pennsylvania. Each family either had children enrolled in day care centers or had their names on a day care waiting list. Three instruments (two scales and a questionnaire) were administered during structured interviews which measured maternal satisfaction with child care and employment as well as the quality of mother-child interaction. The theoretical constructs of role dominance and shifting role dominance were used to conceptulize the problem and to interpret the results which suggest that: (1) maternal satisfaction with substitute child care is not directly related to the quality of mother-child interaction; (2) maternal satisfaction with substitute child care is positively related to maternal work satisfaction; and (3) maternal work satisfaction is positively related to the quality of mother-child interaction. (Author/SDH)

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INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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SUBSTITUTE CHILD CARE, MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT AND THE QUALITY OF MOTHER–CHILD INTERACTION

BY: JANET E. HARRELL

APRIL 1973

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COLLEGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
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Substitute Child Care, Maternal Employment And the Quality of Mother-Child Interaction

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between maternal employment and family life has been a topic of interest and concern to social scientists for many years. This interest in the employment of mothers has been generated in part by the steady rise in the number of working women (U. S. Department of Labor, 1968). For instance by 1967 there were nearly 27.5 million working women 16 years of age and over in the United States, and among these workers were 10.6 million mothers with children under 18 years of age. About 2.2 million of these mothers had children under 3 years of age, and 1.9 million had children 3 to 5 years of age.

The employment of women with and without children is expected to continue to increase. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has estimated that the number of working mothers 20 to 44 years of age with preschool children will increase to 5.3 million by 1980 (U. S. Department of Labor, 1968). Additional working mothers can be expected as a result of the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act which require many of the mothers receiving aid to families with dependent children to be trained for employment.

In 1965, a survey was conducted to identify the child care arrangements of mothers who worked 27 weeks or more during 1964 (U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the U. S. Department of Labor,

1965). These mothers had 12.3 million children under 14 years of age. Of these children, 46% were cared for at home by a relative or a paid attendant. Twenty-eight percent were either cared for by their mother while she worked or their mother worked only during school hours. About 18% were cared for away from home, and only 2 of the 18% were in group day care programs. The remaining 8% took care of themselves, and about 4% of these children were under 6 years of age.

These facts emphasize the need for additional child care facilities and a concomitant need to assess the impact of child care facilities on family life. First, several basic questions should be considered in order to determine the effects of child care facilities on the people who use them. Specific attention should be focused upon the impact of substitute child care on family life, on maternal attitudes toward employment, as well as upon the impact of maternal employment on the quality of the mother-child relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The present study was undertaken to investigate the relationships among substitute child care, maternal employment, and family life. More specifically, the problem addressed was: Does satisfaction with substitute child care have a direct impact on mother-child interaction, and does it act as a facilitating variable which allows the mother to work? If so, how does the mother's attitude toward her job, i.e., work satisfaction, affect the quality of her interaction with her children? The first step in addressing this problem, and the step taken in this investigation, is to determine if an empirical relationship among work satisfaction, child care satisfaction, and the quality of mother-child

interaction does exist. Additional research will be required to determine the causal relationships among these variables.

The importance of investigating these questions can be seen in the following context. An increasing number of mothers are employed, including mothers whose children are preschoolers. More young children are consequently being cared for by parent substitutes such as day care personnel or babysitters. Also millions of dollars are now being spent to develop and maintain organized child care centers throughout the United States, and it has become public policy to require and/or encourage mothers receiving public assistance funds to be trained for employment. If the types of substitute child care which have positive or, at most, neutral effects on children, their parents, and the parent-child relationship can be discovered, maternal employment policies can be formulated and implemented with the confidence that family relationships will not necessarily suffer. If on the other hand, it is discovered that substitute child care has detrimental effects on family life, alternative policies can be formulated in an attempt to develop more optimal conditions.

As most family researchers would no doubt agree, this problem is intricately complex and encompasses more variables than whether or not a child receives substitute child care. What the mother does with her time while her child is being cared for by someone else is also extremely important.

A Review of Related Literature

To this researcher's knowledge, only one study has attempted to assess the direct impact of substitute child care on an aspect of the

parent-child relationship. Caldwell, Wright, Honig, & Tannenbaum (1970) studied lower-class working mothers and their children in an attempt to ascertain the strength of the socioemotional attachment between mother and child in 23 home-reared children and 18 children enrolled in a day care center. At the time the data were gathered, the day care children were an average of 2.5 years of age and had attended the program for approximately 1.5 years. Caldwell found no evidence of socioemotional damage attributable to the mother-child separation of day care children.

The focus of most studies has been on the child's intellectual, emotional, social, and motor development as a result of attendance at day care type programs (Andrus & Horowitz, 1963, p. 93; Glass, 1963, p. 93; Heinicke, 1956; Koshuk, 1947; Moore, 1964; Pease & Gardner, 1963, p. 93; Portenier, 1963, p. 84; Siegal, A., Stolz, L., Adamson, J., and Hitchcock, E., 1959). None of these studies investigated the changes which influence the child's behavior with his parents or how the parents subsequently interact with the child. The most relevant evidence from the literature which acknowledges the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the parent-child relationship as a result of substitute child care has been stated by Koshuk:

> ...experiences in these two nursery schools have operated to reduce tensions and to improve emotional-social adjustment in the young child in a society of his peers--and that this effect is most marked for those children reported to present most home behavior difficulties at entrance. This in turn, it seems, must operate to strengthen family living, especially if there is any indication of carryover to the home situation [p. 137, 1947].

Most of the maternal employment studies prior to 1960 derived from the concern generated by the infant-mother separation studies by Spitz (1945, pp. 53-74) and Bowlby (1951). Debilitating effects on a

child's personality development were found to result from conditions of extreme maternal absence or "maternal deprivation." As a result of these findings, many researchers in the 1950's attempted to determine whether maternal deprivation was synonomous with maternal employment. The results of the studies were generally inconsistent and unclear; however, they did indicate that maternal employment was not a clear case of maternal deprivation and the effects on children were complexly entangled with other factors.

Research since 1960 has attempted to isolate and control for some of these factors. Hoffman (1963) emphasized the need for these controls

> ...the relationship between maternal employment and presumed dependent variables can be examined only when the researcher controls other factors. When these factors are controlled, the correlates of maternal employment seem to disappear. But our present research has also taught us something else: that maternal employment is not so potent a variable that it can be used without further specification and without examination of the data separately within different subgroups. None of the studies done thus far has found meaningful differences between the children of working mothers and the children of nonworking mothers....When differences are studied separately within certain subgroups, however, the children of working mothers are different from the children of non-working mothers [p. 191].

Some of the categories Hoffman suggested as important bases for these subgroups include the mother's attitude toward employment, social class, and the adequacy of substitute supervision. A few studies investigating the effects of maternal job satisfaction, a component of the general category of attitudes toward work, on the mother-child relationship support the fruitfulness of this approach. Hoffman (1961) studied the behavior of Caucasian mothers from intact families who liked and disliked work toward children 8-11 years of age and the effect this

behavior had on the children. She found that children of mothers who did not like to work showed more aggressiveness toward peers and a higher level of rebelliousness than children of mothers who were not employed. Yarrow, Scott, DeLeuw, & Heinig (1962) attempted to relate maternal attitudes toward children with attitudes toward employment among employed and nonemployed women. The data are based on a sample of 100 white, intact, middle- and upper-middle-class families with at least one child in elementary school. The working and nonworking mothers were divided into two groups: those who wished to work and those who did not. These groups were compared in various combinations according to their position on an adequacy of mothering scale. Nonworking mothers who did not wish to work were rated slightly higher on the adequacy of mothering than the others. Working mothers who did not wish to work scored significantly higher than nonworking mothers who wished to work. Hoffman referred to a study by Douvan (Hoffman, 1963, p. 143) which indirectly assessed the effects of maternal attitudes toward employment on the parent-child relationship and concluded that the results indicated: "...When the mother's employment is gratifying to her, the mother-child relationship is a warm one....When the mother's employment is not satisfying, the mother-child relationship is almost the opposite [p. 204]." Siegel (1961) also wrote an article which stressed the importance of considering maternal job satisfaction in relation to mother-child interaction.

In view of the literature which indicates the expected important effects of maternal attitudes toward work on the parent-child relationship, it follows that an analysis of work satisfaction should contribute to a more precise understanding of the way in which the working mother interacts with her children.

Another variable which may also affect the parent-child relationship is the perceived adequacy or satisfaction of the type of child care being used. The nature of the effects of substitute child care on the parent-child relationship is given little clarity in empirical literature. The Caldwell (1970) study, cited earlier, found no negative effects on the mother-child relationship that could be attributed to day care. Koshuk's (1947) comments suggested a positive effect, however he was speculating that the positive effects on the child would generalize to the home environment.

The literature provides very few guidelines for assessing parental satisfaction with substitute child care. However, most of it emphasizes the need for consistent and stable care (Glueck & Glueck, 1957; Mead, 1971, pp. 8-11; Poznanski, Maxey, & Marsden, 1970, p. 758). One exception is a study conducted by Perry (1961) to ascertain the characteristics and attitudes of mother substitutes of employed mothers of preschool children. His data were obtained from interviews with 104 employed mothers and 82 of their mother substitutes. He identified ten characteristics of mother substitutes which mothers considered important and concluded that the employed mothers were quite successful in obtaining desirable mother substitutes and that the treatment of their children was similar to that which the mother would have provided if she had not been working. The children in this study were not involved in a group day care program; however, it seems reasonable to expect that a mother's satisfaction with child care would be a function of what she wants and what she perceives she is getting, regardless of whether the child is receiving individual or group care.

Most of the current literature on substitute child care is focused on group day care. It emphasizes the need to establish additional day care facilities in order to provide an opportunity for mothers to work, especially for those who endure economic deprivation. (Ginzberg, 1967, p. 19; Peterson, 1964, pp. 167-168; Stevenson, 1969, p. 15; Upton, 1969, p. 234). The following statement (U. S. Department of Labor Wage and Labor Standards Administration, 1967), is representative:

> We in the Labor Department recently made a study of unemployment and underemployment in 10 areas where poverty is especially highly concentrated. We found that almost 1 out of every 5 of the slum residents who were not in the labor force but who wanted a regular job gave inability to arrange for child care as the principal reason for not looking for work [pp. 5-6].

This evidence suggests that the most overt consequence of day care is the facilitation of maternal employment.

This brief review of literature suggests that the understanding of the mother-child relationship as it relates to substitute child care and maternal employment has been barely tapped. There are clues that suggest that the mother-child relationship is influenced by her work satisfaction, that a mother's working does not seem to have a detrimental effect on her children, that some mothers are successful in obtaining satisfactory child care, and that substitute child care should be stable and consistent. This information is not much of a foundation for formulating national policies for federally funded day care centers, for encouraging mothers to work, or for guiding research in this area. Therefore, it would appear to be very important to explore the relationships between work, child care, and parent-child interaction.

Conceptual Approach

In the present study a role theory perspective was employed to conceptualize the research problem. In our society, the mother who has preschool children will in most cases define her dominant role as that of mother. According to role theory this characterization should mean that the majority of her time and energy is devoted to fulfilling that role. At the same time she also performs other roles, such as wife, friend, employee; however, these roles will be less significant that her dominant mother role. It is only when her dominant role obligations have been met satisfactorily that other roles can assume significance to her; for example, when a mother perceives that substitute child care is satisfactory she can concentrate on and become more involved in the role of employee. When another role assumes significance, it then has the potential to influence other aspects of life, for instance, the quality of the mother-child interaction. One assumption underlying this theory is that as the perceived importance of a given role increases, its ability to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behavior in reference to other roles becomes stronger. Restated in terms of the roles of mother and employee, satisfactory child care should allow the mother to relax regarding some of her obligations and responsibilities toward her children and, consequently, allow her to become more involved in other activities such as work. This involvement would then set the stage for work to have a more important influence on her interaction with her children.

If the above theory were viewed from another perspective, different results might be anticipated. If the argument could be developed that it was the child and his activities during the day that had the greater impact on the mother-child relationship, then substitute child care would

be expected to be positively related to the quality of parent-child interaction. However, limited evidence (Osofsky & Oldfield, 1971; Waldrop, Pedeison, & Bell, 1968; Yarrow, Waxler, & Scott, 1971), reveals that the parent has greater potential than the child to influence the parent-child relationship. Consequently, it would be expected that the parents' activities and attitudes would have a greater impact on parent-child interaction than the child's activities and concomitant attitudes. It seems likely that, for the child to alter the usual interaction with his parents noticeably, he would have to manifest very obvious behavior changes. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis I: There will be a positive relationship between maternal satisfaction with substitute child care and maternal work satisfaction.

Hypothesis II: There will be no relationship between satisfaction with substitute child care and the quality of mother-child interaction.

Hypothesis III: There will be a positive relationship between maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction.

METHODS

Sample

This study was conducted as part of a larger research project designed to evaluate day care in the state of Pennsylvania. The description of the sample which follows characterizes the families (N = 190) who were interviewed for the family impact portion of the larger day care study.

The sample consisted of intact families (N = 190) from urban and rural Pennsylvania, who had either one child or more enrolled in day care or their name on a day care waiting list. Although the entire sample

was used when the question asked was pertinent, the employed mothers (N = 89) in these families provided the majority of data for this particular study. There were 76 employed mothers using day care (57.6%), and 13 employed mothers who were using other types of substitute child care but who had their names on day care waiting lists (22.7%).

The sample was stratified on an approximately representative basis according to the following criteria: urban vs. rural day care centers, private vs. Title IV-A funded centers;[2] families with children on a day care waiting list vs. families with children enrolled in day care. Table 1 identifies the distribution of the families in the sample in each category.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

Type of enrollment	N	%	N	%
Waiting list	23	12.1	35	18.4
Title IV-A day care	31	16.3	30	15.7
Private day care	34	17.8	37	19.4

The socioeconomic status of the families in this sample was determined by combining the education and job status for both husband and wife on an 8-point scale ranging from 0 to 7 (see Myers, 1972, p. 46, for a

[2]For the purpose of this study the term Title IV-A funded designates those day care centers that receive at least 50% of their financial support from federal funds established by the 1967 amendments to the United States Social Security Act. The term privately funded designates those day care centers that do not receive financial support from United States government sources.

description of this index). Index numbers were grouped to represent lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic statuses. Table 2 identifies the number of families in each group.

TABLE 2

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SAMPLE

SES	N	%
Low	84	44.4
Middle	92	48.7
High	13	6.9

The decision to study only intact families was based on the following reasoning. First, the study was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare which provided assistance in securing the cooperation of the interviewees. It was reasoned that many persons would be hesitant to reveal the presence of an adult male in the household who might be making a financial contribution to the household--a situation which, if discovered, would require an adjustment of welfare payments to the family. Secondly, several of the variables under investigation required responses from both parents since it was desirable to use the same sample for several specific aspects of a larger study so that data would be comparable across specific foci in order to make a more complete analysis of day care in Pennsylvania.

Other characteristics of the sample disclosed that 16% of the families using day care received welfare funds and 35% of the families on a waiting list were receiving welfare assistance. This finding was

consistent with the expectation that the availability of day care would allow a mother to work, and thereby decrease the need for welfare assistance.

The families in this study had an average of 2.8 children under 18 years of age, a figure somewhat higher than the national average of 2.3 children per family. The children who attended day care were between the ages of 3 and 12 years and 83% were between 3 and 5 years of age. The average length of time these children had attended day care was 14 months but the median attendance rate was 8 months.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to measure maternal satisfaction with child care, maternal work satisfaction, and quality of mother-child interaction included the Parent Satisfaction with Child Care Scale (Myers, Elliott, Harrell, Hostetter, 1972), the Bullock Scale of Job Satisfaction (Bullock, 1952), and the Parent-Child Interaction Questionnaire (Myers et al., 1972).

The Parent Satisfaction with Child Care Scale was developed by this author (see Myers et al., 1972) to assess a parent's overall satisfaction with substitute child care. Twelve items were selected for inclusion. They were based on a study conducted by Perry (1961), a personal communication with the personnel of a local day care center, and on pilot interviews with employed mothers using a local day care facility. A parent was requested to rate each of the 12 items on a 5-point scale. For example, one of the questions asked was: "In terms of convenience, would you say that (form of child care being used, i.e., day care, or babysitter) is extremely convenient, very convenient, somewhat convenient, very inconvenient, or not at all convenient?" A response of extremely convenient would be scored five and that of not at all convenient would be scored one.

The additional eleven items included: dependability, price, competency of personnel, teaching children new things, discipline, loving and understanding children, type of food served, extent of worry about leaving children in a substitute's care, children's feelings about child care, spouse's feeling about child care, and respondent's overall satisfaction. A high rating on an item was defined as high satisfaction with that characteristic. The scores from each item were combined to provide an index of satisfaction with child care ranging from 60 (indicating the highest degree of satisfaction with child care) to 12 (indicating the lowest degree of satisfaction).

Maternal work satisfaction was measured by the Bullock Scale of Job Satisfaction (Bullock, 1952). Bullock defined job satisfaction as a composite attitude resulting from a variety of positive and negative experiences associated with work. The reliability of the job satisfaction scale was assessed by Bullock by both test-retest and split-half methods. Test-retest scores resulted in a coefficient of .93 via the Spearman rank order formula and a coefficient of .94 using a Pearsonian Product-Moment correlation. Bullock administered this scale to three additional samples and obtained split-half coefficients of reliability of .93, .90, and .90.

The validity of the job satisfaction scale was checked by two methods. First, the job satisfaction of a group of individuals who could be classified as ex-employees was evaluated. Using personnel records, a panel of experts rated the ex-employees as either satisfied or dissatisfied with their previous work. In six out of ten cases the evaluators agreed with the ratings on the job satisfaction scale. Second, Bullock attempted to determine validity by asking respondents to answer three questions in

addition to the scale questions. If an individual were satisfied with his job, presumably he would not be able to answer the additional questions negatively. The resulting critical ratio was slightly higher, and Bullock concluded that his scale of job satisfaction was adequately reliable and valid.

Responses to each of the nine items on the Bullock scale were weighted with a value from one to five. They were then combined to provide an index of job satisfaction.

After a review of available research instruments designed to assess the mother-child relationship, the conclusion was reached that, in general, these instruments measured only gross, long-range maternal attitudes toward children, the maternal role, and child-rearing practices. They did not appear to be sensitive to the ways in which mothers actually interact with their children or to the quality of the relationship per se. Because the present research problem focused directly on the interaction between mother and child and the possible influence of work and child care on this interaction, it was necessary for this author to develop an appropriate measure, the Parent-Child Interaction Questionnaire (see Myers et al., 1972).

Several employed mothers using a local day care center were interviewed to determine what aspects of the mother-child relationship were influenced by the mother's use of day care and the mother's employment. In general most mothers felt that day care provided a very satisfactory child care service and that their absence from their children allowed them to enjoy their children more. They believed that they were more attentive to their children than if they were with them constantly. In addition the mothers indicated that they spent more time directly

involved with their children in child-centered activities during the time they spent together than if they were with the children continuously each day.

The information gained from interviewing the mothers provided the basis for developing five questions designed to assess the quality of mother-child interaction for working mothers. The format for the questions was the following: During the time we are together, I am likely to: (a) play games with my children, (b) read to my children, (c) explain or teach things to my children, (d) laugh with my children, and (e) hug or hold my children. Each question had five response categories ranging from almost always to almost never. An almost always response was assigned a value of five, indicating a high quality of mother-child interaction, and an almost never response was given a value of one, representing a low quality of mother-child interaction. The scores from each of the items were combined to form a quality of mother-child interaction index. Scores ranged from 25 to 5.

Procedure

Data for this study were collected by trained interviewers who administered a structured interview schedule which included the instruments described previously in this report (Pennsylvania Day Care Study, 1972). After the families were selected, a letter explaining the purpose of the study was sent to them requesting their cooperation. The interviewer then telephoned each family and arranged an appointment for the interview. The interview with the mother lasted approximately 45 minutes.

RESULTS

Correlations were computed to test each of the three hypotheses of the study. The results are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF CORRELATIONAL ANALYSES OF

OF HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIPS

Hypothesized relationship N = 89	r	Percent of variance	Level of significance
H_1: Positive relationship between child care satisfaction and work satisfaction	.27	7.2%	.01
H_2: No relationship between child care satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction	.07	.5%	.52
H_3: Positive relationship between maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction	.22	5.7%	.02

Hypothesis I predicted that there would be a positive relationship between maternal satisfaction with substitute child care and maternal work satisfaction. In the correlational analysis an r of .27 was obtained. This value was significant at the .01 level. About 7% of the variation in maternal satisfaction with substitute child care was accounted for by maternal work satisfaction. Therefore, there was some, however limited, confirmation for the prediction that satisfaction with substitute child care is positively related to maternal work satisfaction.

An additional analysis was performed to further clarify the relationship between work and child care. According to the role theory, before a secondary role can gain in importance in the life of a person, the obligations of the dominant role have to be met. Therefore, satisfactory substitute child care should act as a facilitating condition for mothers to work; however, does it? This question was not answered directly, but the following information lended some clarity.

All employed mothers were asked the open-ended question: "Would you say that the kind of child care you use, or your satisfaction with what you use, has anything to do with how you feel about working? For example, if you know your child is in good hands, can you really get into your work?" The results are summarized in Table 4. Approximately 70% of the employed mothers indicated that satisfactory substitute child care had a positive influence on their work, while approximately 30% perceived that it had no influence.

TABLE 4

EMPLOYED MOTHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE INFLUENCE OF SATISFACTORY CHILD CARE ON PERCEIVED WORK HABITS

Response	Percent (N = 86)
I worry less	45.3%
It has no influence	31.4%
I feel free to work	12.8%
I do a better job	10.5%

Responses to the question, "Were you working before your child started coming to the day care center?," also helped to answer whether or not day care facilitates maternal employment (Table 5). All the mothers in the larger study, employed and unemployed, were asked this question. Of the 119 mothers who responded, 34 were not working at the time of the interview, 16 of the 34 were not working before they began using day care, and eight were working. The majority of mothers employed at the time of the study (79.2%) were already working when they began using day care facilities.

TABLE 5

WORK STATUS PRIOR TO USE OF DAY CARE

Mothers	Employed prior to child's enrollment in day care			
	No		Yes	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Presently employed	16	20.8	61	79.2
Presently unemployed	34	81.0	8	19.0

Another set of data lends some support to viewing satisfactory child care as a facilitating condition for maternal employment. All mothers were asked: "Sometimes people have to take time off between jobs. Did you have to take time off between jobs in the past five years for any reason?" The results are summarized in Table 6. It can be noted from this table that, regardless of the type of substitute child care being used, approximately 40% of the mothers took time off between jobs either to have another child or to care for their children. Perhaps the most supportive data for viewing day care as a facilitating condition for

maternal employment was the large number of waiting list mothers (41.2%) who took time off between jobs because they were unable to secure child care which they perceived as being good.

TABLE 6

REASONS FOR TAKING TIME OFF BETWEEN JOBS DURING PAST FIVE YEARS

Reason	Day care (N = 55)	Waiting (N = 17)
To have children	18.2%	29.4%
To take care of children	21.8%	11.7%
Health reasons (your own or your family's)	3.6%	5.9%
Did not need the money	9.1%	11.7%
Could not get good child care	14.5%	41.2%
Did not want to work	5.5%	0
Fired	27.3%	0

Additional data were also available on the various degrees of satisfaction with substitute child care for mothers who were working as compared to those who were not working. In comparing working and nonworking mothers' satisfaction with substitute child care (Table 7), chi-square analyses of the twelve variables on the Parent Satisfaction with Child Care Scale indicated significant differences between the two groups along the dimensions of: dependability, the extent to which a mother worries about leaving her children, and the children's feelings about the care received. Working mothers rated the form of child care they used as being more dependable than did nonworking mothers ($p < .04$). Working mothers also

indicated that they worried more about leaving their children with substitute child care than did nonworking mothers ($p < .01$). Nonworking mothers reported that their children liked their substitute child care more than did the children of working mothers ($p < .03$). These data do not directly support the idea that day care facilitates maternal employment, however, they do illustrate interesting differences in satisfaction with child care between employed and nonemployed mothers.

TABLE 7

SATISFACTION WITH CHILD CARE
Working as Compared to Nonworking Mothers

Dimension	Chi-square	Level of significance
Dependability	8.09	.04*
Worry about leaving children	12.52	.01**
Children's feelings about care received (likes to be there)	10.56	.03**

*reported greater for working mothers

**reported greater for nonworking mothers

The final series of data relating work and child care was used to compare the child care satisfaction of employed mothers who use day care versus employed mothers who use other types of substitute care. A chi-square analysis revealed significant differences between those mothers who used day care and those who used other types of substitute child care along the dimensions of dependability, teaching children new things, husband's feelings about child care, and general satisfaction with child care (Table 8). For each of these four dimensions, mothers using day care

indicated greater satisfaction than mothers who used other types of care. Again the evidence is not conclusive, however, the fact that employed mothers using day care facilities indicated far greater overall satisfaction with their child care than those employed mothers who used other types of care does lend support to the reasoning that day care may provide a facilitating condition for maternal employment.

TABLE 8

SATISFACTION WITH CHILD CARE

Employed Day Care Versus Employed Waiting List Mothers

Dimension	Chi-square	Level of significance*
Dependability	7.38	.02
Teaching children new things	17.77	.01
Husbands' feelings	27.76	.01
General satisfaction	20.84	.01

*reported greater for day care mothers

Hypothesis II predicted no relationship between child care satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction. In the correlational analysis an r of .07 was obtained. This value was not significant and the null hypotheses was not rejected.

An additional effort was made to clarify the relationship between substitute child care and mother-child interaction through the open-ended question: "Do you think that having your child in (form of child care used) has changed the way you get along with your children?"

If the answer was affirmative, the mothers were also asked "How has your substitute child care actually affected your interaction?" Responses to this questions are summarized in Table 9. Unfortunately, the mothers' answers did not pertain specifically to the question. Instead, their responses referred to perceived changes in their children. The most common changes reported by those in the day care group and those using other types of care were increases in verbalization, independence, and social skills.

TABLE 9

MOTHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION OF THE IMPACT OF CHILD CARE ON MOTHER-CHILD INTERACTION

	Day care (N = 86)	Waiting list (N = 10)
Response	%	%
Gets along better with others	20.9	20.0
Manifests fewer behavior problems	15.1	10.0
Verbalizations have increased	7.0	0
Has become more independent	8.1	0
Social skills have improved	5.8	0
No change	38.4	60.0
Manifests more behavior problems	4.7	10.0

Hypothesis III predicted that there would be a positive relationship between maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction. A correlation of an r of .22 was obtained and found to be significant at the .02 level.

An additional effort was made to clarify the relationship between maternal employment and mother-child interaction through the open-ended questions: "Suppose you weren't working, do you think you and your children would get along any differently?" The responses to this question are presented in Table 10. Although these results did not focus directly on maternal satisfaction with work, they did provide some additional support to the hypothesis that maternal employment is related to mother-child interaction.

TABLE 10

EMPLOYED MOTHERS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION OF THE PROBABLE INFLUENCE THEIR NOT WORKING ON MOTHER-CHILD INTERACTION

	Day care (N = 82)	Waiting list (N = 13)
Response	%	%
We would spend more time together	22.0	30.8
We would get along less well	22.0	0
We would get along better	9.8	7.7
I would teach and discipline better	1.2	15.4
No change	45.1	46.2

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study lend support to the prediction that satisfactory substitute child care acts as a facilitating variable, allowing a mother to work, and that it is her satisfaction with work which has a greater influence on the quality of her interaction with her children than the actual care per se. The relationships among substitute child care,

maternal employment, and the quality of mother-child interaction seem to become clearer by interpreting the results of this study within the conceptual framework of role theory. The dominant role for most mothers, especially for mothers with preschool children, is that of motherhood, and the majority of a mother's time and energy is directed toward fulfilling that role. It is only when a mother perceives that her role obligations are being performed satisfactorily that she can then focus her attention on another additional role outside the family. In other words, it is only when the mother can secure satisfactory substitute child care that she can then allow a job to become involving and satisfying to her.

However, it does not necessarily follow that if the mother is satisfied with her substitute child care, she will then be satisfied with her job. Rather satisfactory child care sets the stage for, or facilitates, her working. If she perceives that her children are being well-attended, she is more likely to worry less about them, to feel less guilty about leaving them, or about abdicating her mother role, and she will be more likely to feel good about working and to allow work to become significant to her. It is only when she allows work to become important to her that her work attitudes can influence her relationship with her children.

The first part of this argument received some support from the statistically significant relationship found for Hypothesis I--that maternal work satisfaction and satisfaction with substitute child care are positively related. This finding did not, however, clarify whether or not the importance or saliency of work is at all influential in this relationship; this question awaits further study.

If the argument is accepted that substitute child care first must be perceived as satisfactory before it can act as a facilitator for

maternal employment, then the data in this study suggest that day care could possibly be expected to serve as such a facilitator. Although approximately the same percentage of mothers who had begun working after they began using day care had also stopped working, approximately 40% of the waiting list mothers had taken time off between jobs because they did not have satisfactory child care. Day care was evidently perceived by its users (both mothers and fathers) as being an extremely satisfactory mode of child care in contrast to other types of substitute care. However further research is necessary to establish definitely whether mothers are more likely to work if satisfactory substitute child care is available. The present study made only initial and indirect progress in this direction.

An additional factor which would seem to support day care as a facilitating condition, perhaps not just allowing a mother to work but also making it easier for her once she is employed, were the significant positive feelings about day care as compared to other types of child care reported for fathers. These attitudes would seem to provide additional support for the mother and indirectly make it easier for her to work.

The results indicated that working mothers worry more about leaving their children with substitute child care and the type of child care used did not seem to be a mitigating factor. In other words, when comparing employed mother's degree of worry about leaving children in the care of another, there was no significant differences between those who used day care versus other types of child care. On the other hand, 45% of the employed mothers indicated that they worried less about their children when they felt that the children were well attended.

Some support for the conceptual argument about role theory was also

found in the results of Hypothesis III--that maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction are positively related. There was a tendency for the mothers who were most satisfied with their work to have a higher quality of interaction with their children. This finding lends credence to the notion that a mother's feelings about what she is doing during the time she is away from her children are related to the way in which she interacts with them when they are together. It should be kept in mind, however, that the total variation in the quality of mother-child interaction is only slightly predictable from knowledge of maternal work satisfaction. This finding might also be explained in terms of the guilt a mother might feel about working and leaving her children. If she felt guilty about working and enjoying her job, she might be more likely to report a higher quality of interaction with her children during the time they were together than if she did not enjoy her job.

One reason for the small correlations found in this study could be the large number of other variables which would also be expected to influence the quality of mother-child interaction. These variables include: enjoyment of the mother role, perceived adequacy and competency of mothering, the quality of the marital relationship, the support a mother receives from her husband, and the ages of her children.

Another possible explanation for the low correlations may be the small range of variation in responses to the items in the work satisfaction and satisfaction with child care scales. Although each scale did discriminate for differing levels of satisfaction, the majority of the responses clustered in the upper end of the scales, that is, the majority of the subjects indicated that they were moderately to extremely satisfied with their respective jobs and substitute child care arrangements.

Satisfaction with substitute child care was not expected to be related directly with mother-child interaction because it was reasoned that the child has a minimum of influence on parent-child interaction. Thus, the mother could have very positive attitudes toward day care, as shown in this study, without their affecting her interaction with her children. This expectation was partially substantiated by the subjects' responses to the open-ended question: "Do you think that having your child in (form of substitute child care being used) has changed the way you get along with your children?" The majority of mothers (60%) reported changes they had observed only in their children. From these results, it would be necessary to infer if and/or how these perceived changes influenced the mother-child interaction specifically. Because most of the responses represented rather subjective observations on the part of the mother, e.g., "Gets along better with others," it does not tell us if by "others" the mother meant herself or siblings or peers. It could be inferred tentatively that, because the mother's responses did not refer directly to her relationship with her child, she did not perceive these as influencing their relationship. The nonsignificant relationship between satisfaction with substitute child care and the quality of mother-child interaction also supported this assumption.

Ideally, a study would be undertaken to investigate the assumption that substitute child care does not have a direct impact on the parent-child relationship by identifying the specific behavioral changes manifested in a child which could be attributed to the substitute child care (e.g., intellectual, emotional, or social changes) by determining if any such changes were perceived by the parents, and by assessing the impact of these changes on the parent-child interaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study suggests that maternal satisfaction with substitute child care is not related to the quality of mother-child interaction directly and that maternal satisfaction with substitute child care is positively related to maternal work satisfaction. It also indicates that maternal work satisfaction is positively related to the quality of mother-child interaction. The next step for future research would be to attempt to link together these three variables in terms of causality to determine if the availability of satisfactory substitute child care enters into a mother's decision to work, if satisfactory child care would then allow work to become significant to the mother, and if work must be significant or salient in order to have an impact on the quality of mother-child interaction.

If these links can be established, it will further support the conceptualization proposed in this study: That while a mother with preschool children performs multiple roles (mother, wife, friend, employee, etc.), the mother role is most often dominant, receiving the greatest amount of time and energy, and the other roles are much less significant. In order for a mother to shift a significant amount of her time and energy to another role, e.g., that of employee, the dominant role obligations must first be met satisfactorily. In other words, shifting from one dominant role to another dominant role requires certain facilitating conditions which satisfy the earlier dominant role. The earlier dominant role does not necessarily lose its significance, rather because its role obligations are being met satisfactorily, another role can be assumed and can then become significnat. This reasoning might

help explain the previous research finding that some women can perform multiple roles (mother, wife, and employee) without detrimental influence to their perceived satisfactory performance of each of these roles (Ridley, 1972).

The present study is related to previous research in another sense in that the positive relationship found between maternal work satisfaction and the quality of mother-child interaction lends additional credence to the general conclusion made by Hoffman (1963) that: "When a mother's employment is gratifying to her, the mother-child relationship is a warm one.... [p. 204]."

Finally, the findings in this study suggest a need for a broader development of research and day care programs. Not only is there a continued need to develop and assess the relationship between child development and day care but there is a concomitant need to concentrate on adult development. This emphasis is especially crucial if, as this study suggests, a mother's attitude toward her work, or perhaps more generally toward her activities while away from the child, influences the quality of mother-child interaction.

These conclusions are by no means intended to diminish the importance of day care programs or other types of substitute child care programs which, from evidence gathered in a larger day care study, are providing parents with very satisfactory child care. Instead the important point which has emerged is that, in order to maximize the potential for human development, the creative and diligent efforts now being made in the area of child development must be continued and adult development and family interaction must also become a focus for research.

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